



Veterans Hit the Ice at First Niagara Center

Veterans from all eras hit the ice December 11 at First Niagara Center in Buffalo, New York, home to the National Hockey League's Buffalo Sabres, for the third sled hockey clinic sponsored by VA Western New York Healthcare System, USA Hockey, Hasek's Heroes and the Buffalo Sabres.

Sled hockey is the newest sport Veterans have the opportunity to play through VA Western New York Healthcare System's recreation therapy program. Fifteen Veterans representing all branches of service were fitted with sleds, sticks and picks as they learned skills and played a game.

"Sled hockey brings Veterans of all ages and abilities together to participate in a sport Buffalo loves," said Pamela Kaznowski, recreation therapy supervisor. "The partnership VA has formed with USA Hockey, Hasek's Heroes and the Buffalo Sabres brings the right expertise together to give Veterans the hockey skills to play and compete at a variety of levels."

Plans are underway for weekly practice and tournaments. "The USA sled hockey Paralympians helping out at these clinics have overcome adversity in their lives and find this a rewarding experience," stated Norm Page, USA Hockey. "It's an incredible opportunity for USA Hockey to help Veterans who have sacrificed so much for us and help them learn the game."

The sled hockey experience brings Veterans together for camaraderie, physical workout and healthy competition. Veterans in the Western New York area can learn more by calling Pamela Kaznowski at 716-862-6814 or by email at Pamela.Kaznowski@va.gov.